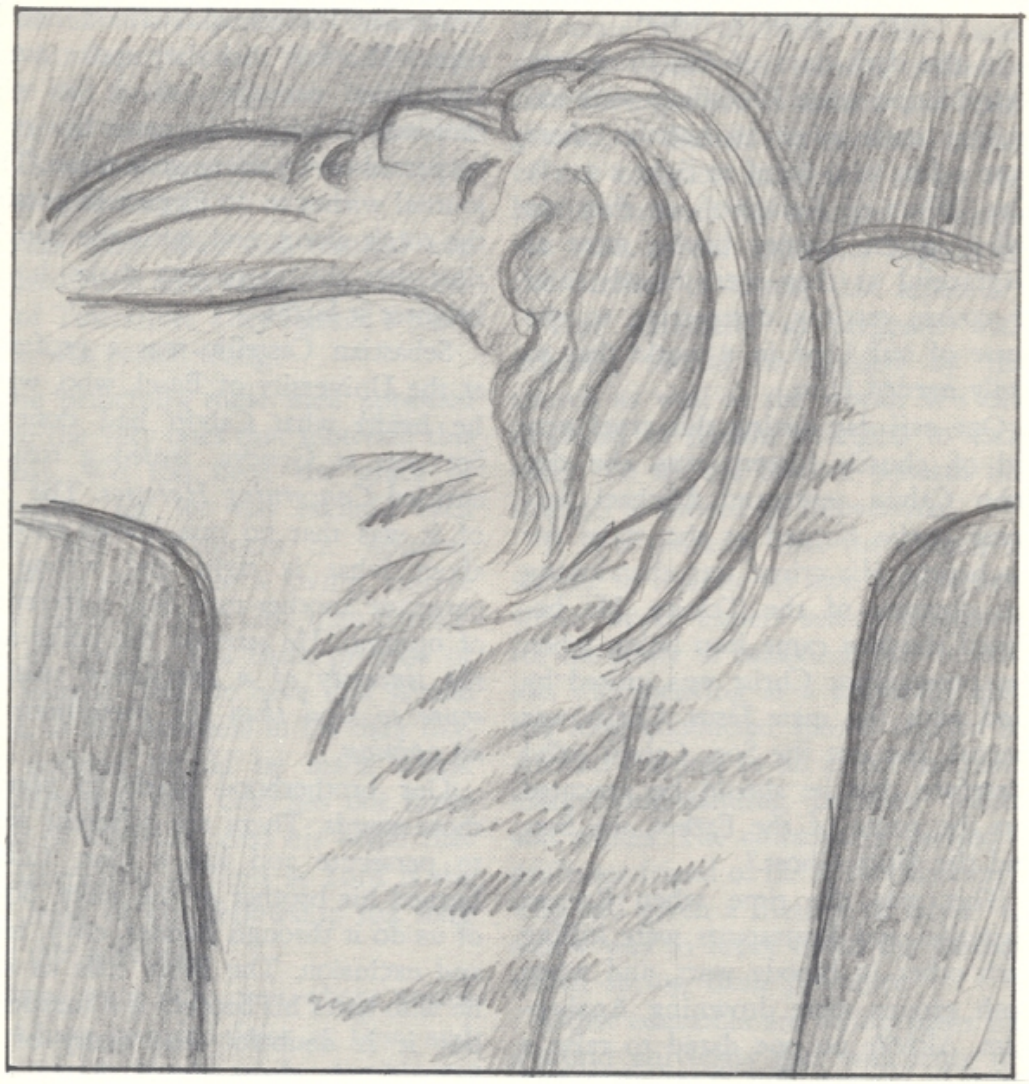
RESTORATION REVIEW



And if one ask him, "What are these wounds on your back?" he will say, "The wounds I received in the house of my friends." (Zech. 13:6, RSV)

See "Fellowship and Brothers in Error," p. 27

Volume 7, No. 2 **February, 1965**

Volume 7, No. 2 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **February 1965**

THEY LIGHTED A TORCH

In the dark days of the Protestant Reformation when Christians were executing each other as heretics there were a few who dared to light a torch. The "Wars of Religion", as they are called in the history books, were as disgraceful as they were bloody, and of course terribly destructive to the cause of our Lord in a world that so badly needed Him.

One evil day during this cruel period of church history was the day John Calvin sentenced Michael Servetus to be burned at the stake for his heresy. His crime was abandoning the doctrine of the Trinity. He believed the Son came into being when the preexistent Christ was united by God with the man Jesus. Christ was eternal, but not the Son. Calvin ruled therefore that he should be executed "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

This was the time when Roman Catholics and Protestants were killing each other in bloody wars, and when both groups were drowning Anabaptists. Almost no one dared to raise a voice in protest. But there were two Protestant leaders who would not be silent. The fact that they spoke out is significant enough, but it is what they said that lighted a torch that must be passed on by every generation. This journal wishes to do its part in passing the torch along, and with the conviction that the more you shake it the brighter it burns.

Sebastian Castellio was a professor at the University of Basel, who, when he heard what Calvin had done to Servetus at Geneva, issued a treatise entitled *Concerning Heretics*. The gist of it was that no one knows enough about what is right and wrong to persecute another man over differences of opinion. He stressed the point that *the sincerity of a conviction matters more to God than the correctness of an opinion*.

Our brotherhood needs to ponder those words. There are different ways to persecute and kill a man. Calvin burned his brother at the stake. Some of us do it through slander, envy, hate, and exclusion. The Bible tells us that he who hates his brother is a murderer. but it is doubtful that many of us believe it.

The other man was Jacobus Acontius, who, still supposing that persecution might be necessary in some cases, insisted that a brother should be charged *only over points declared in the scriptures to be necessary to salvation*. He saw these points as being only two in number: belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and belief in justification by faith.

One historian speaks of these two men in these words: "Very few appeals had been made on behalf of liberty of conscience, and Castellio's and Acontius' were like voices crying in the wilderness."

What these men did resulted one hundred years afterward in the English Act of Toleration. They lighted a torch and it was passed along.

The principles these men appealed to are the very ones that motivate this journal. We too need the grace of toleration, for we too exclude each other over differences of opinion. Castellio's thesis that a loving, sincere heart means more to God than correctness of opinion is a basic premise of this journal. And we have said several times, as did Acontius in his dark day, that nothing should be made a test of fellowship that God has not made a test of salvation. And his belief that the acceptance of Jesus as Lord is the only basis of our fellowship has long been our premise.

These were little men whose voices must have sounded faint at first, and their names barely made the history books. But as the historian says: "Yet the issues these men raised and the arguments they provoked resulted in an agitation that runs in a direct line to the English Act of Toleration."

Their torch has passed to us. Let's shake it for awhile and pass it on!

BROTHER BENEATH THE STRANGER

We are indebted to Adlai Stevenson for this reference to "the brother beneath the stranger:' which we believe says so much. The ambassador used the phrase in a speech at Northwestern University when he said: "Can any greater task befall the university than to create this universal human capacity to work with others, *whatever their divergences in culture and background*, to discern the universal values of our common humanity, to see the brother beneath the stranger, to accept the truth of our solidarity beyond all the barriers of history that separate?"

That statement, so pregnant with urgency, should be heeded by the church as well as the world. We can ill afford to remain strangers to each other. To see the brother beneath the stranger is indeed an imperative.

It is a mockery that the church is willing to tolerate its own divisiveness while world leaders search diligently for the unity of mankind. Mr. Stevenson was speaking at a university that has long conducted special studies in African cultures in an effort to create more understanding between blacks and whites. The ambassador praised a professor friend of his at Northwestern who had given a lifetime of labor "in a new way to break down the hatreds which spring from prejudice."

Other educators are laying plans for a world university that will bring together all the cultures of the world in a discipline of understanding and brotherhood. Most colleges in our country are inviting students from many lands to their campuses for the purpose of discovering universal values and a common humanity. The response is gratifying. Not only are foreign students coming by the thousands, but many of our high school and college youth are going abroad. It is not unusual for our own students in this country to request a roommate who is a foreigner. Never before in human history have people been so eager to understand each other and to exchange ideas with one another. It is as if they supposed that the survival of the world depends upon it. And maybe it does.

So many of us within the brotherhood of believers are strangers to each other. An even greater tragedy is that the Lord is a stranger among his own followers. It may be only a precious few of us who really know as a friend and brother the carpenter of Nazareth. Occasionally we hear of some prominent churchmen who has conceded that if Jesus were in our midst today that he would be as strange and obnoxious to us as he was to his own age. I recall one of my own professors at Harvard expressing the conviction that if the Christ should appear in our culture he would be killed or imprisoned and he added that it would be the church that would do it!

We are not brothers together just because we attend worship at the same place or because we have been baptized and profess the same religion. The large, affluent suburban church may be bound together more by economic status and cultural interests than by their mutual love for Jesus. Just as people can live in the same block or even in the same apartment building with each other for years and yet be strangers to each other, just so people can sit with each other in the same pews at church for a long time and still not know each other. We hate to think of it being true, but surely many people who have long been husband and wife are still strangers to each other.

When men know the Lord they cannot be strangers to each other. They are soon drawn to each other just as each is drawn to the Master. To know each other as brothers men must know the Lord together. This means believing together and suffering together. "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Cor. 12:26).

We are told in Heb. 2:10 that the Christ was made perfect through suffering. If His work was unfinished apart from suffering, how can we expect victory without suffering? "Rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed" (1 Pet. 4:13). "For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict which you saw and now hear to be mine" (Phil. 1:29).

It is when we suffer together"engaged in the same conflict", as Paul puts it that we come truly to know each other. A foxhole is not only a good place to come to know God, but also a place to get acquainted with each other.

"Knowing Christ" was no simple thing with Paul, for he saw it as an experience that comes only through self-denial. "Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ" (Phil. 3:89).

The apostle goes on in verse 10 to speak of "knowing Christ and the power of his resurrection." When people share this kind of faith they know each other, not because of their close proximity in the neighborhood or in a pew, but because their hearts are drawn together in Him. They know each other because they know Him.

WHAT WILL HEAL OUR DIVISION?

What we believe to be a common error in brotherhood thinking in regard to division and its cure appears in a recent issue of *The Admonisher* (San Bernardino, Calif.) The editor suggests that if the support of orphanages were limited to individuals instead of being included in church budgets this would heal the division that exists in the brotherhood over this matter. The editor goes on to speak of "the sponsoring church form of cooperation" as another issue that is dividing the church.

We have long talked this way about division and its cure, and it is time that we give such notions close scrutiny. Is it true that our many divisions have been *caused* by views on the millennium, instrumental music, the manner in which the Lord's Supper is to be served, the dividing of a congregation into classes for Bible study, the professional minister, Bible colleges, open membership, and now orphanages and the sponsoring church? And is it true that these divisions will be healed when all these things are corrected to the satisfaction of all, assuming such a thing to be possible?

Both reason and revelation, as well as human experience, show us that the answer to both of these questions has to be no. Our divisions were not really caused by *things*, nor will the healing come by some magic manipulation of *things*, whether organs or sponsoring churches. It may sound too simple to say that people separate from each other because they want to, but there is much truth to that.

The marriage experience illustrates the point. Who really believes that poor cooking, disagreements about money or how to rear the children, or in-law problems are *causes* of divorce? The last one of us could file for divorce at once *if we really wanted to*. We would find some "cause" for the breakup. But the real cause would be a lack of love. The couple that is "knit together in love" can go through thick and thin and come out loving each other all the more.

We may readily admit that *strains* can be put upon the bonds that hold people together, whether those bonds be marriage or Christian brotherhood, but if the love that does the binding is strong enough the pressures can be endured. "Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col. 3:14).

When a marriage fails, therefore, it looks as if it has to be a lack of sufficient love on someone's part. We occasionally hear of the person who takes a trifling mate back again, despite his or her gross infidelity, and we are made to wonder how he or she could bear to do it. We have to understand that love can be that strong. The prophet Hosea was trying to teach something like this. God told the prophet to take his whoring wife back again, and to *love* her, even as the Lord loves the people of Israel despite their unfaithfulness.

Will a brotherhood splinter itself up into all sorts of parties, one group not even speaking to the other while they debate such issues as whether they should call the others "brother" anymore, if it is really in love? If God in his holiness and goodness can keep loving us despite our waywardness, should not we who are evil find enough love in our hearts to maintain contact with our brethren with whom we differ? If Hosea could put up with a trifling wife for love's sake, can we not bear with each other when the stresses and strains are no more than differences about methods and procedures?

Is there more love in a cold and calloused world than in the church of our Lord? A service club seems better able to let love hide differences than a congregation of saints. And observe how business men manage to get along as well as they do in their partnerships. City councils, schools, lodges, and sewing clubs seem to find more peace than the holy ones of God. Something is surely wrong, and we are persuaded that the something is our own degeneracy.

We cannot agree with our California brother that our divisions will be healed with the demise of the sponsoring church or the striking of orphanages from the church budget. There would soon be something else. Love and only love is the answer. And this begins with more love for the Christ. "He who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20). Love has its fruit, but factious separation is not part of it. Faction is in the heart, not in an organ or communion cups. Faction cannot lodge in a heart that loves.

The California editor would surely respond to this editorial with an insistence that we cannot just love our problems away. 'What do you do when digression is practiced?," they sometimes ask. The thesis seems to be that if "error" or wrongdoing (unscriptural practices) enter a congregation, one of two things must be done: get rid of the intrusion in some way or withdraw from it. But where do the scriptures uphold such a view? We know of no passage in all the Bible that teaches that disciples of Christ should separate from each other. This constant reference to "error" is a matter that needs more attention than we can give it just here, but it is enough to say that all of us are in error in some respects, except those who are exactly right about everything (the number of which must be increasing!). Recently I was asked if I had fellowship with brethren in error. My reply was that I hardly see how I could have fellowship with any other kind!

But to those who are so concerned about "error" in a congregation, so much so that they suppose they have to start another congregation in order to get away from it, we would ask how they handle such matters in their own homes. Do we run off from our brothers and sisters, separate ourselves from our parents, and split our home asunder because of differences? Do we not stay together and work things out the best we can?

It is only "the love of Christ which controls us" that can serve as a healing balm for our many divisive wounds (2 Cor. 5:14).

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

Dimensions in Brotherhood . . . No. 2

FELLOWSHIP AND "BROTHERS IN ERROR"

One of my students at the university where I teach who is a member of the Church of Christ confronted me recently with this: "Our minister tells me that you fellowship brethren who are in error. Is this true?"

How would *you* answer that question? Do *you* "fellowship" brethren who are in error? It would do all of us a lot of good if we could sit together for awhile and talk about the meaning of such a question.

I teach my girls to ask their inquirers to "put a point on it" when they are asked vague questions. (Note: This does not apply as much to questions related to dates and matrimony, however, for this would be too unorthodox even for my students, even if the questions *are* vague!)

So let's "put a point on it." Just what do you mean by *fellowship*, and how about this term *in error*? My student explained *fellowship* to mean something like approval or endorsement, while she understood "in error" to be wrong beliefs and practices in doctrine, mentioning especially instrumental music and premillennialism.

I explained to her, first of all, that I am reluctant to divide our great brotherhood into two groups: those "in error" and those that have the truth. If I did so classify my brethren, I would be inclined to place myself on the side of "in error," for I can hardly conceive of myself being right about everything. Human frailty being such a common commodity, I hardly see how I could be in the fellowship with anyone at all except those that are *in error*. One may wonder how much Jesus was disturbed by such a question, seeing that he freely associated with harlots and tax collectors.

Language can be tyrannical. Loaded terminology with strong emotional overtones often emerges within social institutions in order to control the thought patterns of the group. Perfectly good words like *capitalist, conservative, liberal* can become little tyrants when used in some circles. I have always loved the word *comrade*, but it is virtually ruined by unfortunate connotation.

We practice this kind of tyranny ourselves, for like so many social groups our brotherhood has coined its own vocabulary of oppression. Some of these terms are strictly unique with us. Take the brother who is "out of duty." Does this mean the rest of us are 'in duty"? We also like the term "digressive," which means something different from "out of duty." The "digressive" is nearly always a preacher, though sometimes we apply it to an entire congregation, but whether preacher or church it refers to those that are a step removed from us, such as the Christian Church. The term "unfaithful" is used in a still different sense, and we often use this term in describing our own members.

On and on it goes, this oppressive language; and yet none of these terms are used in the scriptures the way we use them, and some of them do not even appear in the Bible of those who talk so much about adhering to it, even to remaining silent where it is silent. So it is with "in error". All such language serves to tyrannize, drawing circles around brethren so

as to exclude them, or to control thought. Orthodoxy must classify men so as to protect itself. When men think and worship freely they do not have to bother about all this baggage of labels, for then a brother can simply be a brother.

But do not I believe that some brethren are indeed "in error", and if so, what am I going to do about them?, I am asked. My answer is that "in error" may be made to mean entirely too much. It is my conviction that my premillennial brethren are mistaken in some of their interpretations about the kingdom of God, but because of this I do not wish to call them "brethren in error". Why not let them simply be brethren? Since I too no doubt do some misinterpreting, they could just as well call me a "brother in error".

Then do I 'fellowship" premillennialism? Certainly not, for fellowship is with the Son and with all those who walk in His light, not in things like organs or doctrines like premillennialism. Then do I "fellowship" premillennialists? I do not *approve* or *endorse* some of the conclusions that these brethren make, but I am certainly in the fellowship with them, not because they are premills or postmills, but because they are in Christ. And I might well *endorse* (which has nothing to do with *fellowship*) a premill, not because he holds this view, but because he loves Jesus and seeks to serve Him and usually *does* serve Him better than I do.

I am saying that one mistake in my student's thinking is her equation of fellowship with approval. This whole question of fellowship and unity is going to be fuzzy to us as long as we confuse the *endorsement* of a brother with the *fellowship* of a brother. This is why I can say I am in the fellowship with the so-called "brother in error" without in any way approving of the error. It is something like my brothers in the flesh, six of whom I have scattered here and there across the country. The seven of us are brothers together because we were born of the same parents. Family fellowship is a reality because of a common parentage. Like most any family of boys we disagree about things, and sometimes we heartily disapprove of the attitudes and behaviors of each other. They, for instance, would like for me to stay out of jail! But disagreements and disapprovals are irrelevant to our brotherhood. We go right on recognizing each other as brothers regardless of how much we disapprove of each other.

My student had been told that I go among *all* the churches, "fellowshipping anybody and everybody," and she of course has been taught that this kind of association is wrong. One should rather "Come out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord."

This kind of criticism is similar to that made against Jesus when he associated with harlots and sinners. I readily concede, of course, that Baptists, Methodists, Disciples, and Presbyterians are much worse than harlots and publicans. Or at least it would so appear, for we Christians--the *only* Christians really--who talk so much about being followers of

Christ and the true New Testament church will not associate with them. I should modify this slightly, for my brethren do tell me they would go among such people as I do *if they had opportunity to show them their error*. Aren't we glad folks don't treat us that way!

My more aggressive brethren press me with such questions as, "Now tell us, Leroy, if when you preach for the Christian Church or the Baptists you condemn their errors." But I notice they don't ask questions like that about preaching at a Church of Christ. The truth is that I don't make it a point to run down a list of errors that I might suppose a denomination to hold to when I occupy its pulpit, whether it be Baptist, Christian, or Church of Christ. I simply try to make some contribution for good, which of course might well touch upon the sins of us all, which I suppose all sound teaching would do more or less.

This idea that one cannot *scripturally* preach to the Baptists without letting them have it with both barrels is both puerile and asinine. It is also cruel and heartless. It is equally asinine to conclude that if one works with these denominations then he endorses all that they believe and practice. It is like saying a teacher approves of ignorance when he sits with his students, or that a physician endorses disease in being with his patients.

All of us are more or less in error; all of us are more or less sick; and certainly we are all ignorant. We all need to help each other. It is pharisaical on our part to suppose that we are so right and true that we in some way get tarnished by associating with others. I would consider myself most unfree if when preaching to other churches I had to say those things that would preserve my image as a "sound preacher" to the brethren back home.

Those of us who are reluctant to receive within the fellowship our "brothers in error" need to realize that there are different kinds of error, some being much more serious than others. It reminds me of the reaction of the high school girl who asked me whether it was right to kiss the boys. When I ask her in turn to tell me what kind of kiss she was talking about, she appeared to have found her answer. And so I say to those who ask me about my brethren *in error*: What kind of error do you have in mind?

One might have erroneous views (heavens, who doesn't!) without being *in error*, giving that term the meaning implied when we use it. There is a difference between holding an erroneous position through mistaken interpretation and *loving* error. Jude speaks of the latter when he says: "These men revile whatever they do not understand, and by those things that they know by instinct as irrational animals do, they are destroyed. Woe to them! For they walk in the way of Cain, and abandon themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error, and perish in Korah's rebellion." (Jude 10-11)

If brethren are speaking of people like this, who have bad hearts and ulterior motives in their Christian service, when they refer to "brothers in error," then I will go along and say that fellowship is in such cases impossible, for their evil hearts make it so. But usually this term is used by all our different groups in describing each other. One is "a brother in error" because of instrumental music, missionary societies, cooperation, open membership, premillennialism, and on and on. But is it not true that all these things represent *honest* differences of opinion? Can we really say these are errors so serious as to cause breaches in our fellowship?

It is altogether possible that the "errors" that are so offensive to us, even to the point of making association with each other impossible, are not important to our heavenly Father at all. The fact that the scriptures say nothing about these things would suggest this. I am not saying that the questions of open membership, organs in worship, and the sponsoring church are of no significance in the least. These are issues that we should ever keep on the agenda for periodic discussion and review until such time as satisfactory solutions are reached, but we cannot allow them to divide us a dozen different ways, thus obstructing our united witness for our Lord. They are simply not *that* important. They just couldn't be. What has happened to that love that hides a multitude of errors?

Jesus teaches us a profound lesson on the relative importance of errors in Mark 7. The errors that disturbed the Pharisees so much were virtually ignored by our Lord. The passage tells us how meticulous the Jews were about washing their hands before eating, and how they were careful to wash a vessel that had been touched by an unclean person. The *Mishna* reveals that the Jews had to destroy a jar that was touched on the *inside* by unclean hands; if only the *outside* is touched, then a ceremonial washing would do. And as the Pharisees washed their hands the fingers had to be pointed upward with the water flowing to the wrists. The second time around the fingers had to be pointed downward with the water poured from the wrists. The second washing was required in order to purify the hand that washed the other one!

It is this kind of thing that our Lord had to endure. The Pharisees were after him about his disciples not doing this and, of course, they had Bible for it all! They used the word *clean* very much as we use *scriptural*. "Why do your disciples eat with defiled hands?" was the question. And what a lesson he taught them! It is surely one of the greatest passages in all the literature of the world. Oh, how we need that same lesson for our bleeding, divided brotherhood!

The lesson he taught them might well be called *the defilement that is real*, or for our point in this essay we can call it *the error that really matters*.

The Master said to them: "Hear me, all of you, and understand. There is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him."

He left it that way until his disciples asked him what it meant. Then he explained further, and notice how he spoke of the *heart*: "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and so passes on?"

He then added: "What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man."

There's *error* for you! In this case the "brothers in error" were those who equated fellowship with God with being right about pots and pans and washing hands. If the Christ were with us today would he not ignore the petty things that we exclude each other over, and show us that the real error is excluding each other? Would he not pass over all these *things* by which we measure brotherhood and talk about the *heart* of man?

The Pharisees had one idea about "brothers in defilement" while Jesus had another. And our idea of "brothers in error" might be much different from our Lord's judgment. The Pharisees turned Out to be guilty of the real defilement. And so we might turn out to be the real "brothers in error," those of us who will not ask a brother to lead a prayer to the Father because they happen to have an organ where he goes to church.

Notice that Jesus mentions pride and slander, along with deceit and envy and evil thoughts, as the things that defile man. These are the real errors that divide us. Intellectual pride and ecclesiastical self-righteousness do more to divide men than sincere differences of doctrinal interpretation.

When we grow humble enough to lose our pride in the overflowing love of God, we will then be able to see ourselves as the "brothers in error" and to look to His grace to save us and to make us one with all those who receive the Christ as the Lord of their lives. — the Editor

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

DYSFUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF LEGALISTIC TEACHING

Obert Henderson

It appears to be a valid assumption that most people who devote self and time to any work of teaching about spiritual things have a sincere desire to see others fully committing themselves to Jesus. Yet, our teaching often fails to motivate people to so commit themselves. In spite of the fact that we are genuinely desirous of encouraging Christians to become more zealous and fervent in service to God, we often see them characterized by the observance of some outward forms but lacking in evidences of real devotion to the Lord. The thesis advanced here is that this result is, in many instances, directly traceable to the kind of teaching which we do.

In support of this thesis, we are borrowing a term from management theory and applying its concept to our teaching. The word “dysfunctional” is a medical term and signifies the improper functioning of an impaired organ. This term was borrowed from medicine by management theorists, especially those concerned with the area of human relations in business organizations. A fairly common use of the term by these men is to describe the unexpected and undesired consequences that at times result from certain decisions or actions by the manager.

The idea is roughly this: a manager takes a certain action, aiming to achieve a planned response (an expected, desired consequence) from the people affected by his action, but instead of the planned response, his action results in a different response (an unexpected, undesired consequence). Because of this, the organization, or that part affected by his decision, does not function properly, or as the manager desires. This unexpected, undesired result is the “dysfunctional consequence.” Note particularly that it arises directly from the manager’s action.

Carrying the idea further, it is sometimes pointed out that the manager often does not see that the undesired consequence arose from his action, but instead attributes it to something else. He reasons that perhaps he failed to communicate clearly, or that others failed to understand or that perhaps it was just perverseness on the part of others. At any rate, he doesn’t associate the undesired result with his action. With this view of the situation, he may then conclude that what is necessary to achieve the desired result is just to make the original action stronger or more emphatic than it was before. So, he reinforces the original action with the result that the dysfunctional consequence arising from it is likewise reinforced. The more emphatic he makes the action, the more emphatic is the dysfunctional response.

Since management theorists borrowed the term from medicine, we have no hesitation in borrowing it from them. It is an idea that we can apply with profit in understanding why our teaching often fails to achieve the desired results. Specifically, it is contended here that

a legalistic approach to teaching results in consequences that are dysfunctional. Instead of legalistic teaching motivating Christians to real devotion, commitment and service (the expected, desired consequence), it usually motivates only to a bare minimum of outward observances (the unexpected, undesired consequence). It doesn't accomplish what we want to accomplish. But we, failing to see the connection between legalistic teaching and these consequences, usually become harder and more grim in our legalism, hoping this will achieve the desired results. But what happens is that the original undesired consequences are simply reinforced, in most cases.

By "a legalistic approach to teaching" is meant the approach which makes the content of the teaching a set of legal demands concerning outward observances, with the idea presented that if a person conforms to these, this conformity creates righteousness and acceptance by God. These "legal demands" generally derive from a particular interpretation placed on the New Testament writings which view them as a set of legal codes which must be discovered somehow to be binding through a process of determining which statements, commands, examples and necessary inferences must be accepted as a part of "the law," Certain things, by this process, become a part of the code (e.g., the "five items of worship") , while certain other things are omitted from it (e.g., the holy kiss). What is included in such a code varies from teacher to teacher, depending on a number of factors which influence his particular interpretation. But, this point is not particularly pertinent here, and further, has been adequately covered in other articles in this journal, so we leave it here and get back to the thesis.

One frequently observed dysfunctional consequence of legalistic teaching is that it motivates the disciple to do only what he thinks is the minimum essential to "get by." Legalism has no power to motivate one beyond this point. It can never lead men to full, free, complete devotion to the will of God. This is seen in the case of the Pharisees of Jesus' day who were meticulous about outward observances, but never devoted themselves to God, as reflected in their omission of the weightier matters with which the Law also dealt. Legalism leads men to the performance of rites and ceremonies, but not to true sacrifice and service.

Our approach to teaching has been largely and traditionally legalistic. We have tended to lay down a code of laws relating to outward forms, with the implication that if people perform these, they will have made themselves righteous and so have reached a state of acceptance by God. What results, if a person is really convinced of this, is the tendency to be very meticulous about the outward forms, but very much unconcerned about the values of faith in Jesus, or about the idea of full and freehearted devotion of one's whole self to God.

This is an undesirable situation. We feel the need for Christians to be more devoted. But, we are often totally unaware of the fact that the lack of commitment or genuine service is really the direct result of the type of teaching that is done. Lacking this insight, we then usually conclude that the undesired consequences are the result of the failure of Christians to understand what we have been saying. So, we decide that what is necessary is to make the teaching stronger, and more grim. Believing legalism to be the answer, and being unable to find more "legalistic demands" in the scriptures, we usually wind up piling a set of legal codes of our own devising on top of our legalistic interpretations of the word of God. We hope by this means to generate the motivational power to set Christians off to full, free service. But, what happens is that the dysfunctional consequences persist,' and are themselves reinforced by the strengthening of that which give rise to them in the first place.

It is true that the point where different ones place the minimum essential for a person to establish his own righteousness varies from individual to individual. One may have many more "laws" to which he attempts to conform than does another. But legalism always sets a minimum of law keeping somewhere, and says that when one has met this, he has then become righteous, and so is saved. Free, full, devoted commitment to Jesus is never the result of legalism; it provides no basis for such a relationship.

Once we recognize that the dysfunctional consequences that are manifested are not due to the failure of people to understand what we're saying, nor of perversity on their part, but that they are really resultant from the legalistic approach to teaching, then we are in position to change the teaching and the basis of the appeal we make. But, what kind of appeal should be made?

As an answer, notice the appeal that Paul made when he wanted to encourage Christians to present their bodies to God as living sacrifices. In Romans 11:29-36, he magnifies the fact that our salvation is by God's mercy. The greatness of this concept is indicated by this tremendous exclamation: "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" Then shortly thereafter follows the moving exhortation: "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, *by the mercies of God*, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice . . . " (Rom. 12:12). The appeal is not based on the idea that there is a legal demand which we meet and so merit approval but that a recognition of God's mercy should lead to such a full response of dedication to God. Once a man fully realizes that he is a sinner saved by mercy (Rom. 11:32), and that his only claim to salvation is found in his response, by faith, to the grace of God (Eph. 2:8-10), then the instruction as to how God wants him to live is sufficient.

Dysfunctional consequences result when people accept the ideas of legalism. A legalistic appeal can never motivate people to the level of real service, genuine devotion or meaningful commitment to Jesus and his life. It is only as we recognize the grace of God,

and the love on which that grace is based, that we have within us the motivation to full, wholehearted commitment to Jesus. “The love of Christ controls us . . .” — *3117 Sheridan, Loveland, Colorado 80537*

Obert Henderson is Assistant Professor of Business at Colorado State U. He is a graduate of Harding College and took his doctorate at University of Oregon. He has ministered extensively to Churches of Christ, but is not now the minister to any congregation.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

ONE VERSE AND TWO PROBLEMS

Robert Meyers

Two questions fascinate some Bible students: whether writers of Scripture always compose under the influence of a uniform degree of inspiration, and whether translation is not a much more difficult and complex art than is commonly supposed. There is a single verse in one of Paul’s letters which opens the door for discussion of both questions.

Before we put the verse into print, let us set the stage for Paul’s comment. Writing to the Galatian believers, he is extremely unhappy about the circumcision controversies raging among them. He had already been through the fire with those who rebuked him for failing to preach circumcision. Now the anti-legalists are harassing him because he does not make *not* being circumcised important enough. Circumcision is nothing, Paul responds. Only faith working through love is good. But some of his friends want to feel that *not* being circumcised is meritorious. This is simply legalism in reverse, of course, and it upsets Paul.

Goaded by both sides, the apostle lashes out in Galatians 5:12 with one of the most startlingly harsh comments in the entire New Testament. It is so abusive, in fact, that some translators have been unwilling to give his words their natural meaning. The *King James* version says: “I would they were even cut off which trouble you.” This appears to mean that Paul merely wanted the disturbers *separated* from the rest of the church, so that the quarrels could end.

Adam Clarke is typical of those who adopt this explanation and Clarke’s, although not a critical commentary, is probably the only scholarly work widely used among many segments of the Restoration movement. When Daniel Curry supplemented a new edition of Clarke with views “from the best modern authorities,” he translated: “O that they who disturb you would mutilate (emasculate) themselves.” He argues that “but for reasons of taste and good morals all would be ready to accept” this rendering, and he wonders

whether we have a right to adopt forced interpretations to avoid a more natural one, just because the more natural one seems unrefined.

It seems that the *King James* translators simply felt that Paul's remark, naturally translated, was too crude. An apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ ought not to be represented as making so savage a thrust at his enemies. So they found a possible alternative translation and adopted it, a procedure which they followed on several occasions.

The *American Standard* version, which stays as close to the *King James* as it can in most places, translates as follows: "I would that they that unsettle you would even go beyond circumcision." The comment is ambiguous, since no reader could feel quite sure that he knew the meaning of "go beyond circumcision." Obviously, the expression is a euphemism employed by the *American Standard* committee to avoid the clear, biting implications of the Greek text. In a footnote they acknowledge that the original means "mutilate themselves:' The meaning of "go beyond circumcision" then becomes clear. Paul meant that he wished those who were so interested in cutting would go deeper and further and mutilate themselves. This is virulent sarcasm indeed, but the meaning is attested by modern versions.

The *Revised Standard* version says: "I wish those who unsettle you would mutilate themselves!" Raymond Stamn; in his exegesis of this verse in *The Interpreter's Bible*, translates: "I wish that those who are upsetting you would even emasculate themselves!" He says: "This is what Paul said and meant. The KJV gives a very different meaning, but is incorrect. For a similar outburst see Phil. 3:23, where the advocates of circumcision are 'dogs,' and by a play on words — perifome, katatomen — circumcision' becomes 'mutilation'. Paul may have been thinking of the mad spectacle of the Cybele-Attis cult, whose priests in frenzied devotion used to emasculate themselves as a sacrifice to their deity. The inference would be that if salvation depended on merit for a physical operation, these pagan observers of a more drastic rite would have greater assurance than the adherents to the Jewish custom."

James Moffatt, as usual, translates bluntly: "O that those who are upsetting you would get themselves castrated!" Goodspeed records: "I wish the people who are upsetting you would go on, and mutilate themselves!" The *New English* version makes it quite clear: "As for these agitators, they had better go the whole way and make eunuchs of themselves!"

This abbreviated history of the translation of a single verse suggests how boundless are the fields of study for students of the art of translating. For even though there is now general agreement as to the meaning of the apostle's words, one may still encounter a surprising exception. J. B. Phillips turns his back on the recent versions cited above and translates: "I wish those who are so eager to cut your bodies would cut themselves off from you altogether!"

I was so puzzled by this translation that I wrote to Mr. Phillips several years ago. He made a most kindly response. He doubted that the word in question "necessarily" meant an act of physical mutilation. He said he thought, speaking from memory only, that the word in classical times could be used to mean "to break company with" or "to break off in the middle of a speech."

This seemed inadequate support for a translation which goes against all the great modern speech versions. I wondered whether Mr. Phillips' great admiration for Paul, and Mr. Phillips' own gentle nature, caused him to soften the translation. It seems highly unlikely to me that the *New English* committee would go so far as to speak of "eunuchs" without being quite sure that Paul's words were just that harsh.

All this may seem merely curious to most readers, but in addition to provoking thoughts about translations the verse does something else. It permits us to ask the other question: was Paul as deeply under the influence of the Spirit when he wrote this scurrilous pun as when he wrote I Corinthians 13? Paul's Lord had said that His disciples were to love their enemies, bless those who cursed them, and do good to those who hated them. Yet Paul in this moment utters a wish which would seem reprehensible from the mouth of a pagan. Although Christ spoke sharply to the Pharisees, He did not pass beyond the limits of decency. Paul's remark, however, seems inexcusable. That is, unless one admits that any cruelty in word or deed is permissible if one is "under the influence of the Spirit."

Peter was once hypocritical and cowardly in the matter of withdrawing from social activities with the Gentiles. Paul soundly rebuked him. We justify Paul's rebuke on the grounds that Peter was not "inspired" at the time and was clearly in the wrong. We make this judgment on the basis of Christ's own acceptance of the Gentiles and Peter's earlier admission that they were brothers. Can we judge Paul's savage remarks about the circumcision party on the same grounds? Jesus steadfastly refused to say anything like this, even when hounded to death. And Paul himself must often have stressed the requisites of gentlemanly conduct and fairness. Yet here he falls off from it.

If we should judge that Paul was less inspired when he uttered this crude pun, we would be saying in effect that we judge the level of a writer's inspiration by his nearness to the spirit of Christ. Granting the risks in such a procedure, have we any other canon? Or must we simply shrug our shoulders and say that no matter how outrageous Paul's comment seems, he is excusable because he wrote at all times under a uniform measure of the Spirit? — *867 Spaulding, Wichita, Kansas.*

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

CAN MEN DIFFER AND BE RIGHT?

In Romans 14 Paul presents us with a situation which seems to have considerable bearing on our Christian relationships today. The general theme is the treatment by one brother of another, the treatment love would demand. All of us acknowledge our mutual obligation to love in mind and in deed; but, beyond this, we are unsure of a proper application of this passage. It is obvious that Paul is more concerned with the principle of mutual care than he is with the question of eating meat. It is also obvious that such differences are not to divide brothers.

It is highly significant (and somewhat contradictory to our traditions) that Paul presents here a case of two views that are both *divergent* and *opposite*. We have always said, "Where two disagree one is bound to be wrong." It is true that one party here is described as "the weaker" and it is made clear that he has misunderstood the will of God. But the striking thing is that, though wrong in conviction, he is "right with God." Two men whose views are directly opposite, both acceptable to God!

However, when an attempt is made to apply this situation to our present difficulties, some object, "But that was a matter of opinion." Well, Paul *does* identify it so in the first verse, though it is not clearly identified as a matter of opinion in all translations. The *King James Version* renders it "doubtful disputations." Others use the word scruples. The thing which we overlook is that it was a matter of opinion to Paul, and to the stronger brother, but it was not recognized as a matter of opinion by the vegetarian. The weaker brother obviously believed that it was wrong for him to eat meat, which means that this was the will of God as he saw it. If we think we understand what the will of God is, then we do not regard it as a matter of opinion, do we? What is the difference between the man who believes the use of classes is wrong and a matter of faith (but who cannot produce a single passage of New Testament scripture clearly forbidding it or ruling it out) and the man who believes that immersion must be in running water and regards that as a matter of faith (though lacking scriptural support). An idea is only a matter of opinion to him who sees it as such, and the criteria for qualifying ideas as opinions vary from person to person and from party to party, so that what constitutes opinion is itself a matter of opinion upon which we differ.

Probably we shall never all agree on what is opinion and what is faith. I have no confidence that we can gain unity based on agreement in that any more than in anything else. What we must do if we are to have the unity our Lord prayed for is to grant others the right to decide for themselves what their obligations and restrictions may be. We are too interested in what others are doing or not doing; we are interested in qualifying or disqualifying the worship and service of others. One thing we must learn from Romans 14 is that we have no business doing this. Who are you to evaluate your brother's service? Who are you to criticize your fellow servants because their consciences lead them in a slightly different direction from yours? Paul says "It is before his own Master that he stands or falls, and He is able to make him stand." There are surprises in store for the "loyal" brethren, all two dozen or so parties of them. --- S. Taggart.

SPEAKING OF EVOLUTION

Wouldn't it be wonderful if man's spiritual progress during the past three thousand years could have kept pace with his progress in the physical sciences? What if our standard of living had gone up spiritually as fast as it has materially even within the past fifty years? That would be something in which we could take some pleasure, wouldn't it? But, regrettably, that is not the case. Bernard Shaw felt that man's "progress" could be measured largely in terms of his destructive efficiency; he had progressed from the war clubs and axes to the nuclear bomb. Certainly man's knowledge of the resources about him has increased at a marvelous rate, but where do we stand in comparison with a few hundred years ago when we begin to think of morality, or, in other words, the civilization of the human spirit?

Where today can one find a better man than Moses? or Job? or Abraham? Those who have lived in the centuries following the earthly ministry of Christ have they performed better for that than the men who lived in the centuries B.C.? To the man of the materialistic point of view, civilization has come a long way; to the man of the spiritual point of view, things continue as in days of old, with the same self-centered objectives, the same corruption. The only remedy is Christ.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

RESPONSE FROM READERS

We want to thank you for your article on "Paul's Plea for Unity". If we had a few more writers and speakers and *thinkers* like you, we "Campbellites" would still be one body in Christ. Every "liberal" and every "fundamentalist" preacher in our divided brotherhood ought to be on your subscription list! — *California*

The material is consistently stimulating. Even when I cannot fully accord with the sentiments expressed, I feel that my being provoked to deeper thought is general justification for the reading. As a college student, I feel that you are probing areas that too long have been glossed over with shallow thinking and glib answers. — *Alabama*

I wonder what ten more years will do for you and Carl Ketcherside and the Churches of Christ. — *Florida* (not a Church of Christ member)

We appreciate your efforts in providing us with this stimulating publication. I personally am most grateful for every effort being put forth to aid us in understanding our freedom in Christ. May He graciously bless your work. — *Pennsylvania*

There are many at . . . . who are anxious to see your good work progress and they are praying constantly that great blessings shall be yours. — *Student, a Church of Christ college*

I like Bob Meyers' short miscellaneous articles and comments. Tell him to keep them coming. — *California*

I am sending a check to help in the effort toward unity and peace. My prayers are for you. — *Indiana*

I look forward to my copy with eager anticipation each month. Thank you for making it possible. — *Georgia*

You seem to use capitalized "Church of Christ" as if you are naming it and setting it apart as a sect or denomination. If this is true, who all is included in this? The entire church? Or just those who hold to denominational or sectarian ideas? — *Texas*

(If this sister prefers that I play my tune in high and low C's, I suppose it would go this way: we should hope that many in the Church of Christ are in the church of Christ, while surely there are many not members of the Church of Christ who are a part of the church of Christ. Or, to put it another way, I would refer to the Church of Christ very much as she would the Church of God. Yes, I would consider them *both* denominational terminology, which in itself is not necessarily bad. — *Ed*.)

I, too, feel certain that Jesus the Christ is anxious for his followers in the Church of Christ to search and grow *together.* And yet I, too, am sympathetic to any Ralph Grahams who feel forced to leave. Perhaps in his case we should feel fortunate that we did not crucify Christ for him completely. A preacher in the Church of Christ is indeed in a world of limited mental and spiritual mobility. — *Oklahoma*

Much that I read in the *Restoration Review* has encouraged me to believe that you are an instrument in the hands of God in uniting true believers, or more accurately, in leading true believers to recognize and manifest the unity of the Spirit. — *Kentucky*

I always relish your *Review* and look forward to getting it in the mail. — *Dallas*

(We appreciate these words of encouragement more than words can say. We solicit your prayers and support, and we welcome your criticisms. Feel free to send us your candid reactions. Every letter is carefully read, usually more than once. It would be a thrill to many of you if I could pass along statements from brethren in high places, for you would then be convinced that important things are happening, but these must remain "classified". It is enough to say that as men come close! to Christ they come closer to each other, and together they move away from partyism. Blessed freedom! — *Editor*)

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

BOOK NOTES

THE RELATIONSHIP OF BAPTISM TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP. By Joseph Belcastro, The Bethany' Press, 224 pages. $4.50

The author of this book is pastor of the East Columbus Christian Church, Columbus, Ohio. He has done graduate work in some leading universities and seminaries, earning five academic degrees. This is a book with which many will strongly disagree. Yet it should prove interesting for all if only for its breadth of research into the various historical practices of baptism. It may come as a surprise to some that during the formative period of the Restoration Movement "there was not just one, but five, baptismal views with four attitudes towards the unimmersed believers, expressing themselves through three major baptismal positions, namely, open membership, ecumenical membership, and closed membership." One shortcoming is that the author doesn't relate the baptismal controversy which occurred in the noninstrumental music wing of the movement. Some will not appreciate such pioneers as Smith, Lard, and McGarvey referred to as legalists, dogmatists, ere. Also, it is doubtful that McGarvey taught baptism as "indispensable to salvation," since he believed in variable accountability (see *Com. on Acts,* p.262).

The most controversial section of the book will prove to be the author's interpretation of New Testament baptismal passages. (Some, as Dr. J. Daniel Joyce of Phillips University will accuse Dr. Belcastro of "exegetical mayhem.") For example, John 3:5 is

said not to refer to baptism, even though Christendom in general has so interpreted it from at least the days of Justin Martyr (A.D. 150). In fact, baptism is not for the repentant sinner in order to the forgiveness of sins and into a covenant relationship with Christ, in the eyes of the author. *Eis* in Acts 2:38 is to be understood in a referential sense. However, the latest, standard, New Testament Greek-English Lexicon by Arndt and Gingrich defines *eis* in Acts 2:38, *"so that sins might be forgiven."* Further confirmation of this is given in Kittel's newly translated *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (see article on *baptism).* But whether you agree with this chapter or not, it will challenge you to reexamine your thinking. Based on the conclusions of this chapter, a chapter is given over to explaining ecumenical membership, the author's position, which rejects both open and closed membership. It emphasizes faith in Christ as the prerequisite of salvation and church membership. Baptism has spiritual value in the same manner as the Holy Communion. The author may fail to convince you but he deserves an *"A"* for effort. --- *Bob Haddow*

Daily Bible Study by William Barclay. These are really commentaries on the entire New Testament, 17 volumes in all. All are paperbacks and the price is amazingly low, coming directly from Scotland as they do. We can supply these volumes at $1.35 each, or $22.50 for the entire set of 17 volumes. These are the richest, most inspiring studies on the scriptures that we know about. They are published in this country at a much higher price.

Seminar on Fellowship at Wynnewood Christian Chapel, 2303 S. Tyler, Dallas, Texas, June 1518. Brethren from all groups of Christian Churches - Churches of Christ will be invited, with representative leaders sharing in the seminar. The sessions will be open to all interested Christians. Further information will be published later. Correspond with L. M. Roberts, 4450 Preston Circle, Dallas, about the gathering.

Subscribe at once to *Restoration Review.* The price is only $1.00 a year. You can send it to your friends at 50 cents per name in a club of six or more. Back issues are available at ten cents each (monthly numbers) and 3 for $1.00 (quarterly numbers).

Restoration Review, *1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

RESTORATION REVIEW is published monthly (except July and August) at 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas. Leroy Garrett, Editor. Second class permit at Denton, Texas. Subscription rate is $1.00 per annum; 50 cents in clubs of 6 or more.

Address all mail to: 1201 Windsor Drive, Denton, Texas 76201.*